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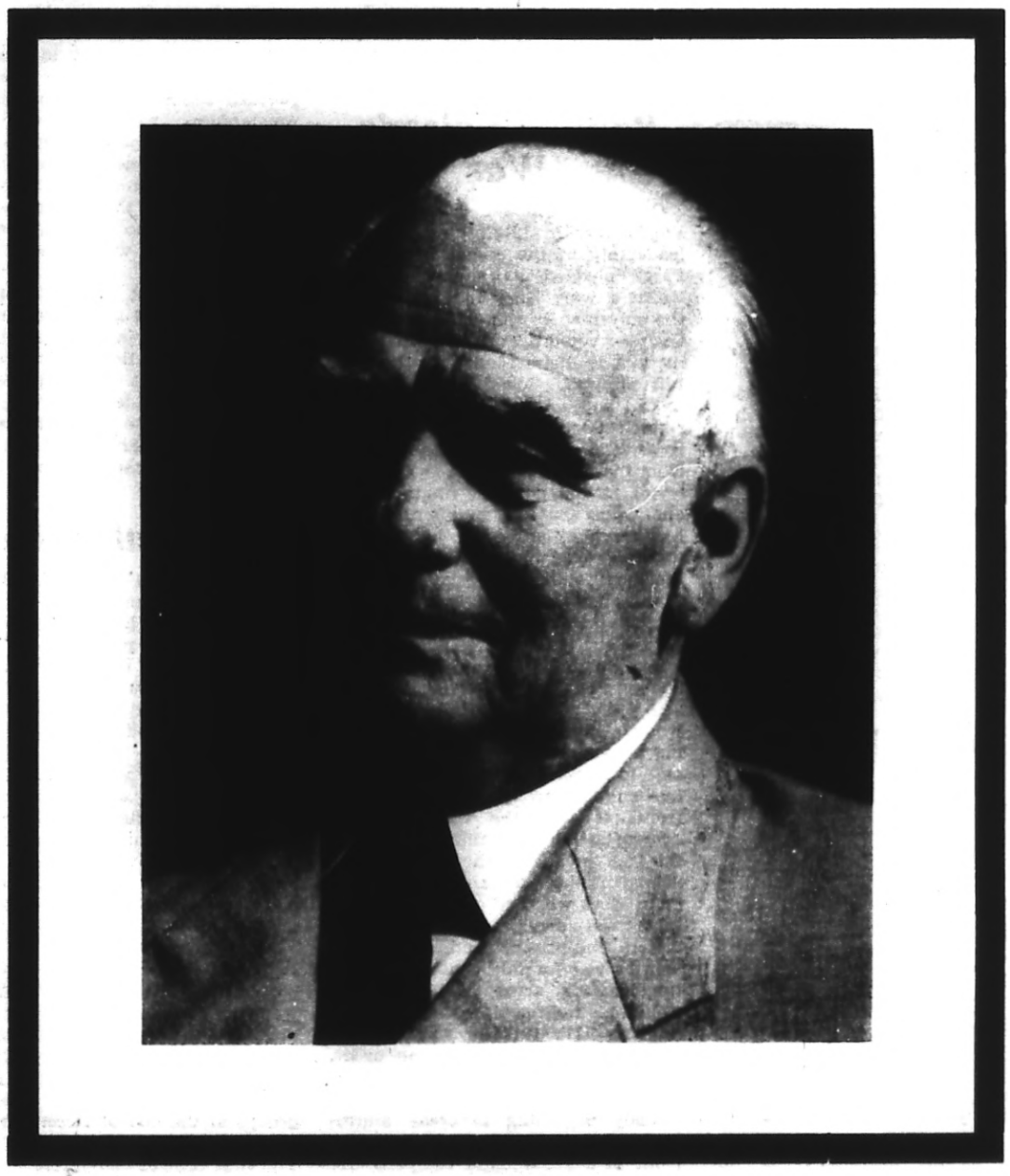

Wilhelm Pieck, President of the German Democratic Republic, died in Berlin of heart failure on September 7th at the age of 84. President Wilhelm Pieck, Grand Old Man of the German Socialist movement, had an unequalled record in the fight against German militarism, and for a decent peaceful Germany. He had been President of the German Democratic Republic since its foundation in 1949. His life is reviewed in this issue.

WILHELM PIECK

A Life of Struggle For Socialism & Peace

Any attempt to write a short biographical note on Wilhelm Pieck, the cabinet-maker who became president, is like trying to write a short account of German history for the past 65 years, for during that period Wilhelm Pieck was a man to reckon with in German politics and the development of the German working-class movement.

He was born on January 3rd 1876 in the little town of Guben, son of a carter and a laundry-woman. He learned the trade of cabinet-maker, and after completing his apprenticeship tramped through Germany looking for work.

In Brunswick he came into touch with the trade union movement for the first time and immediately, without hesitation, joined the Woodworkers Union, of which he has remained a member to the present day. The date was 1894, and Wilhelm Pieck was 18 years old. One year later he joined the Social Democratic Party. He threw himself heart and soul into the work of the party, and soon learned what sacrifices the fight for the emancipation of the workers demanded, for at the end of April 1896, when he was just twenty, he was sacked for urging fellow workers to join in the May Day celebrations.

Out of Work

The next few years were a succession of sackings. Wherever he went, young Pieck got work fairly easily, for he was a good cabinet-maker, but he was soon out of work again, because nothing could stop him from his political and trade union activity.

In the North German port of Bremen, where he settled, he soon began to play an important part in political life, first as trade union official and party dues-collector, and soon in more important posts.

In 1905, just before his thirtieth birthday, young Pieck had become so popular in Bremen that he was elected to the parliament of the Bremen Free City as a Social Democrat, and a few months later he was named full-time secretary of the Bremen Social Democratic Party, one of the most important branches in the whole of Germany.

Soon Wilhelm Pieck, who had somehow found time to study Socialist theory as well as practice, moved to Berlin, where he had been appointed deputy chief of the Central Party School of the Social Democratic Party. Here he became a close friend of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, leaders of the left wing in the German workers' movement.

Battling Kaiser's War

On the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the right-wing leadership of the Social Democratic Party pledged its support to the Kaiser's war. Karl Liebknecht was the only man in the German Reichstag who voted against the war credits, and Wilhelm Pieck gave him his full support. Together with Liebknecht and a handful of other clear-sighted Socialists who opposed the imperialist war, Pieck was expelled from his party post.

But he did not give up the fight, and when the first number of Karl Liebknecht's anti-war paper "Internationale" appeared illegally in March 1915, it was largely through Pieck's help, since he had organised the printing and underground distribution of the paper.

But paper protests were not enough. Two months later, on May 28th 1915, many hundreds of Berlin women appeared before the Reichstag to demonstrate against the war, and to demand that their sons and husbands be brought home from the front. It was the first anti-war demonstration in Germany, probably the first in any of the countries involved in the war, and it was Wilhelm Pieck who had organised it.

He was arrested, dragged from prison to prison, and after five months was forcibly conscripted into the Kaiser's army. Here he continued his fight against the war, until on May 11th 1917 he was arrested once more for disobeying an order. After a confused series of trials — the Kaiser's war machinery was already beginning to creak alarmingly — he was sent back to the front in a punishment company. He managed to desert before arriving at the front, and reached Berlin, where he succeeded in establishing contact with left-wing Socialist colleagues who had, in the meantime, organised the Spartacus group which later developed into the Communist Party.

The Spartacus Group decided that Wilhelm Pieck, together with his son Arthur, a printer, should go illegally to Holland, where they should help to produce a revolutionary paper for distribution to German soldiers.

In February 1918 Wilhelm Pieck and his son managed to smuggle themselves across the closely guarded Dutch frontier, and reached Amsterdam, where, under very difficult conditions, they set to work to produce the newspaper, entitled "Kampf". But producing the paper in Holland was the easiest part of the job. It had to be smuggled into Germany, and it was Wilhelm Pieck who did it.

Carrying great bundles of the paper, he crossed and re-crossed the frontier, delivering it safely in Dusseldorf and Berlin. In October 1918 he brought his last load to Berlin, and decided that his place was now in the German capital, since it was clear that the end of the Kaiser's regime could not be far off.

General Strike

Together with Karl Liebknecht, who had been imprisoned for more than two years, but finally released under public pressure, Wilhelm Pieck organised the general strikes of Berlin workers which, on November 9th 1918, led to the abdication of the Kaiser and the ending of the war.

The left-wing Socialists, Wilhelm Pieck prominent among them, were mainly responsible for unseating the Kaiser and ending the war, but they could not take over the reins in the new Republican Germany, for they had neglected to establish a strongly disciplined revolutionary party.

As a result, the right-wing Social Democratic leaders, who had supported the Kaiser and the imperialist war until the last moment, were able to take over control. To remedy their mistake, the left-wingers hurriedly called a conference of the Spartacus Group and associated groups at the end of December 1918, and founded the Communist Party. The first central committee included Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and Wilhelm Pieck.

The right-wing Social Democrats running the provisional government were still in a very shaky position, and they were scared out of their wits by the new development, and by the possibility that the German workers would rally round the new

(cont. on page 150)

NEUTRAL GERMANY BY 1964

Sensational GDR Plan

1961: Renounce A-Weapons: Arms Stop
1962: Cut Both German Armies: Withdraw Foreign Troops
1963 – 64: Abolish German Armies: Neutralise Germany

All soldiers in the two German states should be demobilised by 1964, all foreign troops sent home, and the whole of Germany should be neutralised. This was the sensational proposal made to the United Nations on September 9th by the Government of the German Democratic Republic.

The proposal was made in a Government memorandum addressed to the United Nations General Assembly scheduled to open in New York on September 20th. A GDR spokesman would stand ready to address the General Assembly on the proposals if invited.

The new GDR plan, which would make a break-through on the disarmament front, and would make it much easier to solve other outstanding European problems, foresaw the disarmament of Germany in three stages, as follows:

Stage I (1960-61)

The two German states would formally abjure the use of force against each other or against other countries; they would agree on an arms stop; and they would renounce atomic, biological and chemical weapons. The final step of Stage I would be the conclusion of a peace treaty with both German states, and the conversion of West Berlin into a demilitarised Free City.

Stage II (1962)

Both German states would make a staged reduction in their armed forces and armament, and conscription would be abolished. (Conscription only exists in West Germany). All foreign troops would be withdrawn from both German states, and all foreign bases liquidated.

Stage III (1963-64)

All German armed forces in both German states should be dissolved, and all weapons destroyed; defence ministries, officers' schools, etc. would be liquidated. West Germany should leave NATO, and the GDR should leave the Warsaw Pact. This would mean the complete military neutralisation of Germany.

The memorandum stated that the large financial means made available by the plan for total disarmament should be used for housing, better social services, and for aid to economically under-developed countries.

The three-stage plan for German disarmament should be supervised by a commission composed on a basis of parity by the parliaments of the two German states, reinforced by trade unionists and members of womens' and youth organisations. Such a control commission could be established either by agreement between the two German states, or as the result of a United Nations ruling.

It was emphasised in Berlin that the total disarmament could be implemented without any change in the capitalist social system in West

(cont. on next page)

FEASIBLE & SENSIBLE

By the Editor

The plan for the complete disarmament and neutralisation of Germany, both East and West, published on this page, marks a milestone in post-war European history.

It is a clear plan, eminently sensible and feasible. One of the greatest points in its favour is that it can be implemented without reference to all the relevant or irrelevant factors of nuclear-test stops, open-skies policies and so on which have bedevilled agreement on a world-wide disarmament plan.

It is a plan which should recommend itself to all sensible people in both East and West. After the experience of two World Wars which had their starting point in Germany, most Britons and Frenchmen, as well as most Russians and Poles, have an instinctive antipathy to Germans in military uniform. The implementation of the new plan would get *all* Germans back into civilian clothes: both the purely defensive People's Army of the GDR commanded by anti-fascist veterans, and the aggressive West German Wehrmacht, commanded exclusively by old Hitlerite generals, would be disbanded.

Incidentally, the new plan would sweep away one of the main western objections to the conversion of West Berlin into a demilitarised Free City. When the Free City proposal was first mooted Western spokesmen objected that West Berlin would be continually threatened by the Soviet Army and the People's Army detachments surrounding it. If the People's Army is demobilised and the Soviet Army is sent home, this argument falls flat on its face.

There remains the time-worn western argument that any withdrawal of foreign troops from the two German states does not give the West a fair break, since it would mean that Soviet troops were withdrawn to the Soviet frontier, only 400 miles east of the German frontier, while American troops would have to go right back to the United States, some 3000 miles away. Anyone who produces this argument obviously wants American occupation troops to stay in Germany in perpetuity; unless somebody invents a way of moving the continents about, America will continue to lie 3000 miles from Germany, and the USSR considerably nearer.

As I said at the beginning, this new plan is sensible and workable: if anybody in the west has a better plan or workable amendments to the present plan, let him put them up; I am confident that they will be given serious consideration by the Government of the German Democratic Republic.

(cont. from front page)

Germany, or the socialist system in the GDR. The fact that the whole of Germany was neutralised, under guarantees from the great powers or the United Nations, would do much to ease tension in Europe, and it would prevent Germany becoming once again the starting point for a world war. At the same time the liquidation of all armed forces in Germany, German or foreign, would make it much easier to take steps towards the unification of the country.

(The full text of the GDR proposals for total German disarmament had not been published when this issue of GERMAN REPORT went to press. We hope to publish the text in our next issue.)

Footnote:

West Germany maintains an army, navy and airforce totalling about 300,000 men, commanded exclusively by men who commanded Hitler's armies in World War Two. All young men of 19 are liable to compulsory military service. It is already armed with tactical rockets with atomic warheads, and plans call for strategic atomic weapons in the near future. In addition there are nearly 400,000 American, British and French troops stationed in West Germany.

The German Democratic Republic maintains a People's Army totalling 90,000 men, commanded by veteran anti-fascists, most of whom fought actively against fascism in the International Brigade in Spain and the anti-nazi underground. There is no conscription. The People's Army has no atomic or rocket weapons, and no such weapons are stationed on its territory. According to western estimates the Soviet Union maintains forces totalling about 200,000 on the territory of the German Democratic Republic.

NEW RULES IN BERLIN

GDR Fulfils Potsdam Agreement

Since September 9th, citizens of West Germany have had to apply for a special pass if they want to visit the Democratic Sector of Berlin (East Berlin, the capital of the German Democratic Republic). The new regulations announced by the Ministry of the Interior of the GDR do not affect West Berlin citizens, or foreigners visiting the divided city.

Special offices were installed at the main border points between East and West Berlin, at which West German citizens could apply for passes to visit the Democratic Sector for business purposes, for family reasons, or to attend sports events or theatres. A GERMAN REPORT representative who visited several of these offices on September 10th stated that in most cases passes were being issued on the spot, with no more delay than is involved in buying a cinema ticket.

The new restrictions were imposed because the West German authorities have been for years using West Berlin as a centre of cold war activities, although West Berlin does not form part of the West German Federal Republic, and is situated deep inside the German Democratic Republic.

Dr. Lothar Bolz, Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic, stated on September 10th that it was nonsense to say, as West German newspapers had done, that the Democratic Sector of Berlin was "barred" for West German citizens. "Entrance to the capital of the German Democratic Republic is regulated, just as is entrance to the West German Republic and its capital Bonn", he stated.

"The new regulations announced by the Ministry of the Interior simply ensure that a check is made on which citizens of West Germany enter the capital of the GDR.

"Citizens of the GDR who travel to West Germany are also checked by West German passport officials.

"Steps have been taken to see to it that all peace-loving West Germans — and they form the overwhelming majority — should receive passes without delay.

"The claim that this is a breach of the alleged Four Power status of Berlin is completely baseless. It was only possible to speak of such a status as long as the Allied Control Council existed, the task of which was to implement the principles of the Potsdam Agreement on the denazification, demilitarisation and democratisation of Germany.

"When the western powers sabotaged the Potsdam Agreement and established the separate West German state, they did away with the basis for the Allied Control Council. They have themselves emphasised this fact by imposing the Three Power Occupation Statute on West Berlin. The existence of the Three Power Occupation Statute makes it ridiculous to talk today about an alleged four power status in Berlin."

The new regulations imposed on September 9th had been preceded at the beginning of September by similar restrictions for a five day period. These restrictions were timed to coincide with the holding of two cold war rallies in West Berlin.

Spokesmen of the German Democratic Republic stated that such rallies were part of West German preparations for waging aggressive war, and as such were banned both under the Charter of the United Nations and the Potsdam Agreement. The Government of the GDR had not only the right but the duty of doing all it could to prevent infringements of such basic documents, which formed part of the framework of international law.

Newspapers in Britain, France and other countries were strongly critical of the West German and West Berlin authorities for allowing such rallies to be staged in West Berlin.

"The Times", London, stated on September 1st that the western allies should not permit "the exploitation of their altruism for dubious purposes. This heading clearly includes the meetings this week of German irredentist organisations seeking the return of former German-inhabited territories now under Polish and Czech rule. Whether or not their cause

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is just, Americans, British and French either regard them as suspect or know nothing about them. They are certainly not prepared to endanger peace in their interests. The same sentiments probably apply over the proposal to hold the Bundestag meeting in Berlin. It is unnecessary and provocative. It is no concern of the western allies to jeopardise themselves or others in its furtherance."

The "Daily Express", London, stated on September 2nd:

"The West Germans scandalously abuse the position of Berlin. That city was not not split into four to provide them with a base for a diplomatic campaign against the Russians . . . The Germans hurl their pebbles at the Russians and shelter behind British and American troops. It is time the Germans came to their senses. And it is time the British got out of Berlin."

The official declaration issued by the Government of the German Democratic Republic on August 30th stated in part:

"1960 has been marked by a speed-up in the strengthening of the West German Wehrmacht and its equipment with rockets and atom weapons, and great increase in revenge propaganda in West Germany. The present West German Government has made revenge its official policy. Scarcely a week passes without demonstrations, financed and guided by the Bonn Government, which make criminal territorial claims on other states.

"The thirst for revenge is simply the open expression of the aggressive aims of the German militarists, and is directed in the first place against the German Democratic Republic and those countries which neighbour upon the two German states. (The two German states have land frontiers with Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland and Denmark, ed.).

"To support and to tolerate revenge-seeking demonstrations means to support and tolerate preparations for aggression and military adventures.

"Basic post-war documents of international law, such as the United Nations Charter and the Potsdam Agreement, forbid revenge-seeking as propaganda and preparation for aggressive war. The hate demonstrations of militarists and revenge-seekers planned to take place in West Berlin between September 1st and 4th must be regarded from this aspect. This applies both to the 6th Congress of so-called "Returners Home" (an organisation mainly composed of former Wehrmacht POWs in the Soviet Union, ed.) and the so-called "German Day" (an annual rally of ethnic Germans from eastern Europe resettled in Germany after 1945 under the terms of the Potsdam Agreement, ed.) . . .

"This fact makes it necessary for the Government of the German Democratic Republic to declare once again that West Berlin does not form part of the German Federal Republic (West Germany, ed.), and that it may not be governed by West Germany. The Bonn Government and organisations guided and financed thereby have no right to be active in West Berlin. These activities, and in particular the militarist and revenge demonstrations are aimed against the state and social order of the German Democratic Republic, on whose territory West Berlin lies. Every such demonstration in West Berlin, even if it has the support and approval of the West Berlin municipal authorities, endangers the peace of Europe. In the interests of the maintenance of peace the Government of the German Democratic Republic is obliged to do everything to prevent such militarist and revenge-seeking propaganda.

"For this reason . . . the Government of the German Democratic Republic declares that it will use all means at its disposal to check militarist and revenge-seeking activities based on West Germany. The Government of the German Democratic Republic has taken all necessary steps so that the territory and the communications of the GDR will not be misused to organise and help the militarist and revenge-seeking demonstrations in West Berlin . . .

"The Government of the GDR draws the attention of the Governments of the USA, Britain and France to the dangerous activities of the militarists and revenge-seekers in West Berlin. As long as the occupation regime continues in West Berlin these governments too bear the responsibility for the revenge-seeking propaganda and all its results. The Government of the GDR draws particular attention to the fact that it is impermissible to misuse the air corridors for the transport of militarists and revenge-seekers from West Germany to West Berlin. The air corridors were installed solely for the supply of the troops of the western powers stationed in West Berlin. The Government of the GDR draws the attention of the Governments of the USA, Britain and France to the fact that they will bear full responsibility for any results of the fact that the air corridors are misused to bring persons to West Berlin for the hate-propaganda meetings."

GDR OFFERS HARVEST HELP TO W. GERMANY

The GDR offered on September 1st to lend harvesting machinery and personnel to West Germany to help get in the harvest, endangered this year by extremely bad weather. The offer was made in a letter sent by GDR Minister of Agriculture Hans Reichelt to his West German opposite number Werner Schwarz.

In Democratic Germany, despite unfavourable weather, the grain harvest was practically completed by the end of August, thanks to properly planned community efforts, including large-scale use of volunteer labour from the towns, and big units of the People's Army. In West Germany, on the other hand, up to fifty percent of the grain crop was still in the fields at the beginning of September, and poorer farmers in particular faced big losses.

The offer of the GDR Minister proposed that authorised representatives of the two ministries should confer on the measures to be taken in order to protect the livelihood of the West German peasants. The West German Ministry of Agriculture rejected the offer as "pure propaganda".

In a TV appearance, West German Minister of Agriculture Schwarz said that West German farmers "should wait for heavenly help" rather than accept assistance from East Germany.

Trade With Cambodia

The southeast Asian kingdom of Cambodia signed its first trade and financial agreement with Democratic Germany at the conclusion of a visit of Cambodian government experts lasting from August 2nd till August 29th.

An agreement on economic and technical cooperation between the two countries was also signed.

Aviation Spy Sentenced

The technical director of the firm producing all aircraft for Democratic Germany, Manfred Gerlach, 55, was convicted of espionage in Dresden at the end of August. Gerlach had used his frequent trips to West Germany and western Europe to take filmed blueprints and documents to western espionage agencies. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

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party and call for real socialism instead of the sham socialism which they were offering. So they immediately called in the old Prussian generals to help them remain in power. In the words of the famous saying: "The Kaiser went, but the generals remained."

Officer Killers

On January 15th 1919, reactionary officers of the Kaiser's Guard Cavalry Division raided the house where Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were staying, and seized them. Wilhelm Pieck, who had in the meantime obtained false papers for his colleagues for just such an eventuality, arrived at the house a few minutes too late, and was seized too.

On the same day, the officers brutally murdered the great revolutionaries Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in their headquarters in the Eden Hotel. Wilhelm Pieck escaped death by a miracle, because he was already equipped with a false passport and the reactionary officers did not recognise him, and he was able to escape from their imprisonment the next day.

Later in 1919 he was arrested once again, this time by the regular police, and charged with "high treason", but four months later, before he could be brought to trial, he managed to make a spectacular escape.

Despite the murder of most of the main leaders of the young Communist Party, it grew stronger and was able to attract wide support amongst the workers, so that by October 1920, in the elections to the Provincial Parliament of Prussia it gained 31 seats. One of the successful candidates in the election was Wilhelm Pieck.

From that date on, until Hitler overthrew the Weimar Republic in 1933, Pieck was without a break a parliamentary representative of the German workers, first in the Prussian Parliament, and after 1928 as a leading member of the Communist fraction in the Reichstag.

Fighting Frame-Ups

Apart from his general work in German politics, Wilhelm Pieck helped to found the International Labour Defence, which played a leading role in the organisation of the international campaigns for the release of frame-up victims such as Sacco and Vanzetti and Tom Mooney in America, and many others.

During this period he made frequent visits abroad, and made his only trip to Britain in November 1929, when he spoke at meetings organised by the Friends of the Soviet Union.

In the years immediately before Hitler came to power, the main fight of the German Communist Party was directed against fascism, and Wilhelm Pieck was associated with repeated attempts to attain joint action by the Communists and Social Democrats against the nazi danger. He appealed again and again to his old acquaintances and colleagues in the Social Democratic leadership to join forces against Hitler, but in vain.

On January 30th, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor, and the persecution of the Communist Party began. After the Reichstag Fire, set by the nazis themselves, the persecution redoubled, and on March 3rd Ernst Thaelmann, Chairman of the Communist Party, was arrested. Wilhelm Pieck, who had already gone underground some days earlier, now took over the leadership of the party.

For the first few weeks of the Hitler dictatorship he remained in Berlin, reorganising the party which had been shattered by arrests and murders, but the decision was soon taken that he must emigrate, to organise resistance from abroad.

So for the second time in fifteen years, Pieck slipped illegally across the frontier, to organise from abroad the fight for peace and socialism in Germany.

Fighting Hitler

In the emigration, first in Paris and Prague, and later in Moscow, Wilhelm Pieck maintained the continuity in the leadership of the German Communist Party, worked on new political programmes to meet the changing situation, and above all, maintained contact with the thousands of brave Communists struggling underground in Germany despite the ferocity of the nazi repression.

But his work was not only for a decent Germany. As a firm fighter for proletarian internationalism, Wilhelm Pieck was honoured by election, at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in August 1935, to the post of Secretary of the Executive Committee of the International.

During the war, like thousands of other German Communists, Socialists and Democrats, he carried on the fight against Hitler. On March 6th 1942, immediately after his recovery from a serious illness, he made the first of a whole series of broadcasts to the German people.

In the prisoner of war camps in the Soviet Union he worked untiringly as member of the "National Committee of Free Germany", convincing captured members of the Wehrmacht that Hitler's policies could bring only disaster; appealing to all opponents of Hitlerism and war to work together to end the war and to build a new and really democratic Germany from the ruins.

In May 1945 the war at last came to an end, and a few weeks later Wilhelm Pieck arrived back in Berlin to take over the leadership of the Communist Party. He rallied round him those Communist veterans who had survived the war in the underground, in prisons and in concentration camps. Ernst Thaelmann had been murdered by the nazis a few months before the end of the war, after 11 years imprisonment, and the full weight of the task of leading the party fell on the shoulders of Wilhelm Pieck, now nearly 70 years old.

Socialist Unity

The first task was to end the division in the ranks of the German working class, and Wilhelm Pieck threw all his strength into this task. In April 1946 his efforts and the efforts of the remaining Communists and Socialists in East Germany, who had learnt the lesson the hard way under Hitler's savage repression, were crowned with success, and the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party were merged to form the Socialist Unity Party.

Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl, Social Democratic leader, became joint chairmen of the new party.

The problem of the unity of the workers' parties had been solved; enormous tasks remained. The junker estates were divided up amongst the peasants in East Germany, the factories were taken over by the workers, nazis were removed from public life, the schools were reformed; and in all these fields Wilhem Pieck's enormous experience in public life and the socialist movement was very valuable.

But the problem of German unity remained unsolved — blocked by the partitioning policies of the western powers. The partitioning culminated in September 1949 in the formation of the separate West German state under Anglo-American protection and inspiration.

The answer in East Germany was the formation of the East German state at the beginning of October 1949, and on October 11th Wilhelm Pieck was elected by the People's Chamber to act as first President of the German Democratic Republic. In 1953 and 1957 he was unanimously re-elected for further four-year terms.

WILHELM PIECK'S RECORD

Half a Century of Good Sense in Speeches, Articles

In sixty-five years of political activity Wilhelm Pieck always spoke out for workers' rights, for peace and for socialism. On these pages we present a small selection of quotations from his speeches and articles.

Eight Hour Day

"The motion presented to you calls for an eight-hour day for all workers in municipal enterprises. This is a demand which will make the hair of many present, particularly the private industrialists, stand on end... At present the ten hour day is the rule in most municipal enterprises, but some workers still have a twelve-hour day."

Speech in the Parliament of Bremen Free City, February 7th 1907.

Are Ballots Enough?

"We shall not be able to win socialism with our ballot papers, for the capitalists will not just sit back and watch us, they will use all their weapons against us as long as they possess them."

Article in the "Bürger Zeitung", Bremen, May 23rd 1908.

All Out on May Day

"I do not agree with the method of sending deputations to the employers, asking them kindly to allow us to hold May Day demonstrations. The workers must see that they must celebrate May Day, not with the permission of the employers, but against the will of the employers."

Speech at the Congress of the Social Democratic Party, Nuremberg, September 15th 1908.

"Workers, Soldiers, Comrades! . . . We demand not the abdication of a monarch, but the formation of a republic! We demand a socialist republic with all its consequences. Forward in the fight for peace, liberty and bread."

From a leaflet of the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Council, signed by Pieck, Liebknecht and other socialist leaders on November 9th 1918, the day on which Kaiser Wilhelm abdicated.

Martyrs

" . . . 15,000 proletarians have fallen in Germany on the battlefield of the revolution, and thousands of our comrades have been thrown into jail. Our comrades are hunted, are driven from house and home, our newspapers are forbidden, our printing shops smashed. All means are being used in an attempt to strangle the revolutionary movement in Germany . . . But we do not complain about our losses. We know that our struggle demands sacrifices, and that the class enemy uses all means to remain in the saddle . . . That is why we must unite the workers, for we know that if we are united the struggle will be shorter, and the sacrifices will be fewer."

Speech at the Congress of the Communist Party of Germany, Berlin, November 2nd 1920.

Fight War

"The imperialists are preparing at full speed for a new world war . . . The Communists propose holding a plebiscite against the construction of armoured cruisers (the beginning of German naval rearmament after the first world war, ed.) because this will give the workers a chance to express their readiness to fight against this war policy."

Article in the "Rote Fahne", Berlin, October 14th 1928.

Generals & Nazis

"A clique of generals, together with the National Socialists, are making preparations for the establishment of a military dictatorship . . . which aims at a breach of relations with the Soviet Union, and war to destroy the Soviet Union. The process of fascisation is going ahead rapidly in Germany... Under the leadership of the Communist Party the masses are being mobilised for the fight against fascism, and for the revolutionary struggle against war preparations."

"Leningradskaya Pravda" Leningrad, May 7th 1932.

Unity . . .

"We Communists want to establish unity in the youth movement, party organisations, trade unions and everywhere else. If we can form a joint mass protest movement against the fascist terror... we shall be able to beat Hitler, destroy fascism and build a free socialist Germany."

Illegal leaflet addressed to members of the Social Democratic Youth Movement, distributed in August 1934.

. . . with Socialists

"In order to create a force capable of overthrowing fascism in Germany, the Communist Party... wishes to reach agreement with the Social Democratic Party on joint action and a central united front agreement."

"Die Internationale", April 1936.

Solidarity with Jews

"The new increased pogroms directed against Jews in Germany have caused a strong reaction amongst all decent people in the world ... The masses of Germany, above all the working class under the leadership of the Communists, reject all hate campaigns directed against the Jews: they feel solidarity with the persecuted Jews... This fight against fascist barbarity is not only a matter for the working masses in Germany, but also for the peoples of the whole world. Everybody who protests against the terrible pogroms must draw the correct conclusion that effective protection against fascist barbarity and war provocation can only be found in the creation of a broad international fighting front against fascism and against its allies in the reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie in the democratic countries."

"Rundschau", Basel, November 24th 1938.

"Overthrow Hitler"

"We, the Germans, will only be able to live in peace and friendship with other peoples after we have overthrown Hitler. Only then will we be able to rehabilitate the name of Germany, which has been besmirched throughout the world by Hitler's war crimes and barbarities ... But we shall only be able to do this if everyone in his place does everything to overthrow Hitler."

Address to the German people from Radio Moscow, April 8th 1942.

"German compatriots! You can be a mighty force if you join together to fight against Hitler. On your

side you will find the peoples of the Soviet Union, Britain and America, and all the countries oppressed by Hitler. Your enemies are the Hitler gang and the big businessmen who are making thousands of millions of marks from this war."

Address to the German people from Radio Moscow, September 1st 1942.

Berlin Liberated

"Berlin has been liberated from Hitler's gang . . . A difficult period faces our people. Under military occupation the German people will have to make good the damage which the Hitlerite war and Hitlerite barbarity have caused to other nations. Our people will fulfill this duty because they know its necessity, and because this is the way to their own rehabilitation. The nazi criminals must be dragged out of their hiding places, and rendered harmless."

Address to the German people from Radio Moscow, May 4th 1945.

Worker's Split

"We must never forget that Hitler was only able to come to power, and launch the Second World War, because the working people of Germany were split and because it was not possible to establish the unity of the democratic forces in the fight against Hitlerism . . . The task of the hour is to establish a firm unity of the anti-fascist democratic and progressive forces of the people. We Communists believe that this unity must and can be established."

„Deutsche Volkszeitung", Berlin, June 12th 1945.

Who is Responsible?

"We must clarify the question of the responsibility (for the Hitlerite war). It is not a service to the working class to oversimplify the question and say that only the bourgeoisie was guilty of the war, and that the working class is completely innocent . . . If the working class, the majority of the population, had been as a whole innocent . . . how could Hitler have driven the whole of our people into this disastrous war? The question of the co-guilt of the German working class must be investigated and the necessary lessons must be learned. We want the working class to see clearly how it could come about that Hitler established his barbaric power . . . Of course the anti-fascist pioneers waged a heroic struggle against the Hitler regime, and paid for it with immeasurable sacrifices, but it is no service to the working class to equate these pioneers with the whole working class."

"Deutsche Volkszeitung" Berlin September 20th 1945

NO NOTEBOOK

Owing to extreme pressure on space, it has been found necessary to drop the regular "Berlin Notebook" from this issue. The popular feature will be back without fail in the next issue of the paper.

"Keep German Unity"

"The four anti-fascist parties (Communists, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, Liberal Democrats, ed.) have called this demonstration for the unity of the nation, to ensure the establishment of a united Germany. They were moved to do this by the ever more open efforts which are being made to destroy the national unity of Germany . . . Various groups and persons are utilising the present division of our country into four occupation zones to try to partition Germany permanently . . . One of the reasons for this is the attempt to save from destruction, at least in some parts of Germany, the forces of German imperialism."

"Deutsche Volkszeitung" Berlin February 1st 1946.

Reaction in West

"This is the true position in the western occupation zones . . . Jewish cemeteries are being desecrated, nazi activists and Hitlerite officers who shot 'deserters' after the capitulation are being freed, church authorities are exercising film and theatre censorship, the trade unions are being prevented from having a say in the factories — these are a few of the steps in the path of reaction in the West and South of Germany."

"Neues Deutschland" Berlin June 13th 1948.

East-West Cooperation

"The West German Federal Government and the Government of the German Democratic Republic must work together side by side in order to serve the national interests of the German people and to struggle for the unity of Germany, for a peace treaty and national independence. If the West German Federal Government and Federal Parliament will join in this endeavour, then we shall come closer to each other, and shall finally be able to overcome the partitioning of Germany and to create German unity, which will prevent Germany from becoming an American colony and the deployment area for a new imperialist war."

From a speech to both houses of parliament of the German Democratic Republic after election as President on October 11th 1949.

French and German

"The joint resistance of the patriots of both France and Germany to the re-establishment of German militarism in West Germany which threatens the national security of France and Germany to an equal degree, has created a new situation in German-French relations which I welcome whole-heartedly. The German Democratic Republic, for its part, will never tolerate that war should ever again be waged against the French people by Germans."

From a Berlin radio address, November 13th 1952.

Worker's Rule

"The working class in our German Democratic Republic has taken over the factories of the monopolists and is running them itself. The working peasants have taken back their fields, of which the junkers robbed them in the past . . . For our young people the German Democratic Republic provides every possibility to learn a trade and grow up imbued with a spirit of proletarian internationalism and friendship for all peoples. We have thus taken the first steps towards the glorious goal, the construction of a Socialist society."

From a speech delivered in Berlin, January 18th 1953.

West German Danger

"The consistent policy of our Republic for the maintenance of peace is particularly important in view of the dangerous developments in West Germany and West Berlin, which are a threat to peace. I am convinced that a growing number of people in West Germany will see the difference between our peace policy and the policy of cold war pursued by the Bonn Government."

From a New Year's Message, January 1st 1960.

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